

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS

CIA Goofs Again in Powers Case

THE GOVERNMENT is still not telling everything that could be told about Francis Gary Powers and his flight over Russia in the U-2. Powers' appearance before the Senate Armed Services Committee added little to the public record and had the earmarks of a carefully rehearsed performance.

The one thing of importance that developed was the complete exoneration of Powers. The Central Intelligence Agency now says that he followed instructions to the letter in everything he did. Those instructions included an injunction to U-2 pilots, if captured, to "adopt a co-operative attitude toward their captors."

The CIA leaves no alternative but to accept this explanation. But since it is the key to public understanding of Powers' role, why wasn't the explanation made long ago?

For nearly two years the controversy has raged over what Powers should have done. His capture and trial were embarrassing and damaging to U.S. policy and prestige. Therefore, by street-corner judgment, he should have resisted capture, possibly even to the point of destroying himself as well as his plane.

In the circumstances, his total absolution comes as something of a surprise. The total blame for the U-2 fiasco now perforce falls on the CIA rather than on its employee.

To make doubly sure, the CIA spelled out Powers' instructions in considerable detail. He was to "surrender without resistance" if capture appeared imminent. He was "free to tell the full truth" about his mis-

sion except for certain specifications of his aircraft. There were "no instructions that he should commit suicide and no expectation that he would do so" unless he were subjected to unbearable torture.

His interrogation by the Senate committee also produced an explanation as to why he failed to destroy the plane: He couldn't, because of its spin after it was damaged by the Russian rocket. And he had an answer when asked why he had told the Russians he was sorry for what he had done. He was sorry, all right, but in a different way than he led the Russians to believe, he said.

The upshot of all this is that we must now believe one of two things: Either Powers is wholly in the clear and served his country well as a skilled pilot, or the CIA is compounding all of its previous errors in the U-2 incident by perpetrating a monstrous hoax on the American people.

The CIA is not in business to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, even to the American people whom it serves. That much we know. But we cannot believe it would protect Powers at this point if Powers had not proved worthy of protection.

The CIA gets no visible gain from clearing Powers. In fact, the exact contrary is true. It gets a black mark for withholding for so long the facts about his original instructions. If Powers' captors were entitled to hear "the full truth" about his mission, surely the American people were entitled to equal consideration.